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# Understanding the Founding and Growth of the Masonic Lodge in Mormon Nauvoo

by

Alfred H. Eaton

Submitted to the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Bachelor of Science in Humanities and Science

at the

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

May 1994

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## **Abstract**

By 1838, the Mormons' great exodus from New York to Utah had carried them to Nauvoo, Illinois. Nauvoo was to be the Mormon's Zion, and they made their greatest effort to construct God's Kingdom there. In this atmosphere, a Masonic Lodge was founded (15 March 1842). Many scholars have uncovered connections between Freemasonry and Mormonism before and after the lodge founding.

But the exact reasons that the Mormons accepted Freemasonry at Nauvoo are not fully understood. Various writers have considered the problem from economic and political standpoints, but these angles ignore the religiosity of the Mormons in Nauvoo.

This thesis explains the theological and personal motives that the Nauvoo Mormons (including Joseph Smith) had for founding the Lodge. The doctrinal developments at Nauvoo emphasized the Mormon priesthood, future rituals to be performed in the Temple, and the importance of doing as much as possible to perfect one's self. With these new doctrines and his own secret doctrine of polygamy, Joseph Smith found religious truth and valuable secrecy in Freemasonry. With Smith's approval of Freemasonry and the Church's new doctrine in mind, the Nauvoo Mormons immediately accepted the lodge as a valuable tool to bring about the Kingdom.

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

By 1838, the Mormons' great exodus from New York to Utah had carried them to Nauvoo, Illinois. The Mormons had been harrassed and persecuted on almost every step of their journey. The new Mormon settlement of Nauvoo on the Mississippi, far from New York, provided a new sense of stability and power to the Mormon people. Nauvoo was a carefully planned community which they believed to be their Zion. There, among great Mormon achievements, a Masonic lodge was founded.

The Nauvoo Masonic Lodge was officially installed during March 15-16, 1842, by Abraham Jonas, the Grand Master of the Illinois Grand Lodge. At the same time, he conferred upon Joseph the ultimate honor of being made a Mason "on sight." The Nauvoo Mormons had begun practicing Masonry in the winter of 1841, well before the official installation. Jonas found that thirty-three Mormons had already been designated as members and fifty-seven petitions for various degrees had been received.

Within six months of the Nauvoo Lodge's installation, nearly three hundred Mor-

mons were initiated. Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, Wilford Woodruff, and other future leaders of Mormonism all became Masons during this time. The growth rate of the Nauvoo Lodge quickly made Mormon Masons a majority of the Illinois Masonic population.

Many scholars have tried to understand how and why Masonry came to Nauvoo. Much writing has examined and detailed the connections of Masonry and Mormonism from their connections in the Burned-over District of New York to the similarities of their rituals. But the exact facts that brought Masonry to Nauvoo are lacking. Political motivation and desire for social order are the most common arguments used to analyze the historical problem. These arguments are very powerful when considering Masonic motives. For example, Goodwin has shown that Jonas had a political motive to install a Nauvoo Lodge; he was running for a state senatorial position [13].

When considering the Mormon motives, these same arguments fail because they essentially secularize the religiosity of the Nauvoo Mormons. For a complete understanding of why Mormons would have founded a Masonic Lodge, the religious connections between Mormonism and Freemasonry must be uncovered. For Joseph Smith to have become a member, and for the other Nauvoo Mormons to have joined with such fervor, the founding of the Masonic Lodge must have been justified in religious terms.

Evidence suggests that Nauvoo Mormons' beliefs more than justified the founding of the lodge; they actually pre-empted and celebrated it. At the basis of this notion is the connection between the philosophy of Masonry and the theology of Mormonism before Nauvoo. They held some beliefs in common: a belief in God, the need for a

fine moral character, and a continuous seeking for inspiration.

Mormon doctrinal developments in Nauvoo added immensely to this slight connection and explain why Masonry was brought into the Mormondom at Nauvoo. New doctrine emphasized the Mormon priesthood, future rituals for the Temple, and perfectionism, all bound by a Mormon commitment to establishing the millennial Kingdom.

As a religious seeker, Joseph Smith was entering a critical stage in his life at Nauvoo. He was increasingly placing the burdens of financial and political leadership of the Mormon community on trusted Church leaders, and was undertaking a renewed emphasis on revelation and its implementation. Nauvoo Mormons were critical of Smith's revelations. With current Mormon doctrine and his secret doctrine of polygamy in mind, Smith found that Masonry entailed some ideas of ritual and secrecy that would be valuable in the Kingdom.

The Nauvoo Mormons waited continually for revelation from Joseph Smith. Millennialism abounded, and the Mormons hoped to establish the Kingdom in Nauvoo. Smith held the "keys" to the Kingdom, and the Saints were dependent on him. They infused their society with religious meaning, especially in the social groups promoted by Smith, like the Nauvoo Legion and the Female Relief Society. However, the Mormons did not accept every new doctrine without consideration (for example, polygamy), but as religious people considered the proposed changes in light of their current beliefs. Masonry did not contradict Mormon theology, and its practices connected with Mormon doctrine in Nauvoo; therefore, the Mormons accepted the Lodge as a source of truth and hoped Masonry would bring the Kingdom closer.

## Chapter 2

### Early Mormonism

As the founding Prophet, Joseph Smith was the central figure of early Mormonism. The early Mormon community based its identity on his prophethood, the Book of Mormon providing the necessary proof of his authority. Thus, Mormons accepted Smith's proclamations and ideas completely. Their devotion to Smith and to the Mormon community *first* placed them at odds, both socially and economically, with members of mainstream American culture. Many times this tension erupted in physical force, and Mormons were pushed ever further westward.

The Mormon Prophet Joseph Smith was raised as part of a large, poor farming family in Western New York. He lived two miles from Palmyra, a village that had its start due to the Erie Canal's nearby construction. Arriving after the canal's completion, Smith, his parents, and his eight siblings found themselves destitute. While trying to clear and cultivate their own land, they took many other jobs to survive. Smith's mother sewed for extra money, while Joseph and his father participated in "glass-looking," money-digging, and other forms of divination for profit.

Apparently, Smith shared other traits with his father, a man characterized as “a curious combination of deist and seeker” [28]. Smith’s father distanced himself from the local Christian churches and became involved in a personal quest for religious truth. He claimed to have received visions of a coming Restoration.

Smith’s father’s claims were not extravagant for the times. Western New York was afire with “excited” religion, revivals tearing through the frontier. The theology taught espoused individuality through personal Bible study and comprehension, freedom to develop personal religious beliefs, and an emphasis on free will [9].

Denominations competed fiercely for new converts, serving to disillusion some members of the society. In the spring of 1820, Smith claimed that this same disillusionment drove him to pray to God for truth about “which of the sects was right.”

In his First Vision, Joseph related that:

I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong, and the personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt . . . He again forbade me to join with any of them: and many other things did he say unto me which I cannot write at this time. [1]

The First Vision marks the arrival of an important foundation of Mormonism. In it, God stated that all creeds of current Christianity were an “abomination” and “wrong” to Smith. If so, then it would be necessary to found a new primitivist Church, with a revelator at the head to create a religious society that was perfect. Thus, Mormons had no desire to assimilate themselves with non-Mormons who were either irreligious or in a state of corruption.

Beginning in September 1823, Smith received a series of revelatory visits from an



angel, Moroni. Joseph was given specific instructions for obtaining golden plates from a neighboring hill. Strikingly similar to his involvement in “money-digging,” Joseph recovered the plates, and through the use of “peep-stones”, stones that allowed one to receive visions, Smith was able to translate the “Reformed Egyptian” writing on the plates. Soon, Joseph’s claims spread into his community, and even caused some treasure seekers to conspire to get the plates of gold. Joseph was physically attacked once, and finally was forced to remove himself to the home of his new wife, Emma Hale Smith, in Harmony. There, he began the formal translation of the plates that became the Book of Mormon, published in 1831.

With the publication of the Book of Mormon, the Mormons had proof of their mission of Restoration, as well as a living prophet. Many early Mormons claimed that the Book of Mormon was the key to their conversions [5]. Their faith in the Book of Mormon as scripture and in the prophethood of Joseph Smith provided the first uniting beliefs of the Mormons as a community.

Within a week of the Book of Mormon’s publication, Joseph Smith baptised six new adherents into a church (The Church of Christ), and within five months forty persons recognized him as a prophet, won over by healings and millennial preaching. Smith then prophesied the founding of a New Jerusalem in the West and sent a party of three men to find the new territory. This group of men met Sidney Rigdon (1793-1876), a Campbellite minister recently removed from the Disciples of Christ and founder of a communistic community in Kirtland, Ohio. The Mormon expedition baptised Rigdon and his group of followers into the Mormon Church. Consequently, Joseph Smith published a revelation that proclaimed the Mormons should gather in

a “City of Holiness.” In January of 1831, the Mormons began their move to Kirtland, their first western home.

On 9 February 1831, Joseph Smith proclaimed the “Law of Consecration and Stewardship,” a doctrine that called upon ideals of Christian primitivism. In it, the Mormons were called to make an economic reorganization, a “United Order,” to create a Utopian community.

Smith’s *Lectures on Faith* were a succinct summary of Mormon doctrine in Kirtland; they were written as a teaching source for a theology class taught by him during the winter of 1834-5. They were originally published as part of *Doctrine and Covenants*.<sup>1</sup> The Lectures on Faith were divided into seven sections; they described Mormon thought about faith and the basis of that faith. The Lectures contained hardly any doctrine that was peculiar to Mormonism, however.

In Kirtland, the Church faced immediate persecution. The main cause for the unrest was the founding of a Mormon bank that defaulted because it was loose with issuing notes. Its failure brought fires, rioting, and upheaval into the community. Other incidents, such as Joseph Smith being tarred and feathered, were simply directed at the Mormons’ unwanted presence [4]. Because of the persecution, some Kirtland Mormons moved to Independence, Missouri (1831-1833), and then on to Liberty, Far West, and Adam-ondi-Ahman, Missouri (1834 to 1838).

During the Mormon settlement of Missouri, Joseph Smith’s revelations centered around the establishment of the millennial Kingdom. Smith instilled Mormon the-

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<sup>1</sup>Note: The Lectures were later removed from the *Doctrine and Covenants* because of they contradicted current Mormon doctrine in some areas.

ology with themes that paralleled Israelite theocracy. He stressed the importance of building a temple, and washings, anointings, and covenants were thoroughly proclaimed. A patriarchal system was promoted, as well. Men were to hold the priesthood positions and the role of leadership in their families.

The typically irreligious lifestyle of the non-Mormon Missourian sharply contrasted that of the Mormons in Missouri. This created a resentment of Mormons by Missourians, which exploded on October 30, 1838, when a unit of the Missouri state militia attacked a small Mormon colony at Haun's Mill. Seventeen Mormon men and boys were killed. The next day, militia commanders moved into Far West where Mormons were forced to surrender their leaders, weapons and property. Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and other leaders were jailed during the fall and winter of 1838-1839.

The English Mormons (won by missionary activity begun in 1837 [33]), Missouri Mormons, and remaining Kirtland Mormons began to converge on Commerce, Illinois in 1838. Opponents of Mormonism had been able to move the group away, but at every stop, new Mormon converts had come aboard. The persecution had been difficult for Mormons, but it began to serve as a unifying force for them. To them, their ability to stay united was proof that they were willing to suffer for religious truth [5].

And when Smith returned to his people in 1839, after having been jailed, the Mormons were ready to make another effort at establishing the Kingdom. When Leonard Pickel considered Joseph's persecution, he considered it proof of Smith's religious authority:

. . . I intend to do more for it [the construction of the Temple in Nauvoo] I have seen Brother Joseph and talked with him and I have heard him preach

and I Beleive him to be a prophet for his enemies has pursued him very much he has walked through the midst of them the[y] could not hurt him for God is his stay and gide [26, 18 December 1842]

## Chapter 3

# Masonic Connections to Early Mormonism

Freemasonry played an important role in American history, and its connections with early Mormonism, an American religion, were strong. For one, the rise of anti-Masonry and the beginning of Mormonism happened in the same locale, the Burned-over District of Western New York. In fact, the early Church gave many hints of anti-Mason sentiment, which makes the founding of the Nauvoo Lodge surprising. Still, Freemason philosophy did not contradict Mormon theology, and this provides a strong connection. Also, Masonic lodges had lost their elitism and were quickly spreading into the frontier.

The history of Freemasonry in America began as early as English colonization. The founding of Masonic lodges in the New World was a natural extension of the English culture then present. Freemasonry had been a craft practiced by English nobility; therefore, the large seaport cities of the colonies, the centers of colonial

prestige, were the natural arenas for the introduction of Masonic Lodges. The first official lodges were founded in Boston (1733), Philadelphia (1734), Savannah (1735), Charlestown (1735), and Portsmouth, New Hampshire (1736) [10].

During the Revolution, the Masons had their first great influence on American culture. Benjamin Franklin served as a Grand Master in Philadelphia. A Boston Lodge produced (on their meeting night in a pub) a group of men dressed as “Indians” who began the Boston Tea Party. George Washington and most of his generals were Masons; their brotherhood allowed Washington a close trust with his leaders [10]. These Revolutionaries brought freedom for the colonies to form a new nation-state. And with national independence, they brought freedom for American Masons to found their own Grand Lodges. Previously, the American Masons were dependent upon the English Grand Lodges to expand the number of lodges.

English Freemasonry was characterized by its exclusivity to English noblemen. America had absorbed some of this exclusivity. The inherent tension this created with radical American republicanism and democratic ideals climaxed early in the nineteenth century in the Burned-Over District. There, the “national attitude toward Freemasonry as an elite structure undoubtedly accelerated the impetus to the William Morgan episode of late 1826” [17].

William Morgan, a Mason in western New York, wanted to found his own lodge, but his petition was denied. His reaction was the writing of a book meant to “expose” Masonry. Morgan was quickly arrested for petty crimes, and when released from prison, a group of men abducted him, and took him away, never to be seen again. The sheriff and leaders of the community were all Masons. Subsequently, they were

accused of murdering Morgan. The event was discussed in the area for over ten years.

The Morgan episode was characterized as having proved the existence of the secret, elite power and aristocratic nature of the Masonic brotherhood. Even more, Masons were under attack from the religious movements in the Burned-over District. The rituals of the Masons were sharply criticised for their religious meaning, a meaning that was separate from that of the Bible's complete truth. Thurlow Weed, motivated by political ambition, created the *Anti-Masonic Enquirer* (first published February 12, 1828) to cement and formalize this anti-Masonic sentiment in the Burned-Over District. Weed was able to organize an anti-Masonic party which won him and his supporters seats in the New York state legislature. The movement climaxed with thirty-five Anti-masonic newspapers and the spread of the anti-Masonic party into Vermont, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Michigan, and Pennsylvania. By 1840, the movement lost its fervor and was absorbed into the Whig party.

Joseph Smith and other early Mormons, if not affected directly by anti-Masonry, were certainly aware of the anti-Masons' arguments against Freemasonry. The Book of Mormon contained some references that showed anti-Masonic sentiment:

Helaman 6: 21 But behold, Satan did stir up the hearts of the more part of the Nephites, insomuch that they did unite with those bands of robbers, and did enter into their covenants and their oaths, that they would protect and preserve one another in whatsoever difficult circumstances they should be placed, that they should not suffer for their murders, and their plunderings, and their stealings.

22 And it came to pass that they did have their signs, yea, their secret signs, and their secret words; and this that they might distinguish a brother who had entered into the covenant, that whatsoever wickedness his brother should do he should not be injured by his brother, nor by those who did belong to his band, who had taken this covenant.

23 And thus they might murder, and plunder, and steal, and commit

whoredoms and all manner of wickedness, contrary to the laws of their country and also the laws of their God.

Ether 8: 15 And it came to pass that thus they did agree with Akish. And Akish did administer unto them the oaths which were given by them of old who also sought power, which had been handed down even from Cain, who was a murderer from the beginning.

16 And they were kept up by the power of the devil to administer these oaths unto the people, to keep them in darkness, to help such as sought power to gain power, and to murder, and to plunder, and to lie, and to commit all manner of wickedness and whoredoms.

17 And it was the daughter of Jared who put it into his heart to search up these things of old; and Jared put it into the heart of Akish; wherefore, Akish administered it unto his kindred and friends, leading them away by fair promises to do whatsoever thing he desired.

18 And it came to pass that they formed a secret combination, even as they of old; which combination is most abominable and wicked above all, in the sight of God;

19 For the Lord worketh not in secret combinations, neither doth he will that man should shed blood, but in all things hath forbidden it, from the beginning of man.

20 And now I, Moroni, do not write the manner of their oaths and combinations, for it hath been made known unto me that they are had among all people, and they are had among the Lamanites.

21 And they have caused the destruction of this people of whom I am now speaking, and also the destruction of the people of Nephi.

22 And whatsoever nation shall uphold such secret combinations, to get power and gain, until they shall spread over the nation, behold, they shall be destroyed; for the Lord will not suffer that the blood of his saints, which shall be shed by them, shall always cry unto him from the ground for vengeance upon them and yet he avenge them not. [3]

These statements clearly invoke direct connections with anti-Masonry, although some modern scholars have tried to argue against anti-Masonry having caused the actual writing. <sup>1</sup> Mervin Hogan, a prolific author on the subject of Mormonism

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<sup>1</sup>The statements of the Book of Mormon speak clearly against "secret societies" and seem to hint directly at Masonry. However, many modern Masonic scholars point out that Masonry has never really ever been secret. Various critical writings had been published since the eighteenth century, and Masonic publications describing the organization in detail had been published. This all raises the question as to whether or not Joseph Smith and early Mormons would have recognized the Book



and Freemasonry and a Mason, admitted that “The ordinary layman of the time and locality immediately identified or related such expressions with Freemasonry.”

[17] And it is this fact that is important to understanding the Mormons’ opinion of Masonry. The Book of Mormon’s stance against secret societies makes the founding of the Nauvoo Lodge seem that much more mysterious.

There has been much speculation as to why the Mormons turned against, or ignored, the Book of Mormon writing. Joseph Smith’s brother, Hyrum, had been a Mason since his initiation at Victor, New York in 1827. While living in Palmyra, Hyrum was a member of Mount Moriah Lodge No. 112. Hyrum would certainly have provided Joseph with insight about the debate, and may have lessened the intensity of the anti-Masonic fervor for him.

Smith may not have agreed with the critique of Masonic rituals. Truthfully, Masonry could be characterized as having been more “religious” in those days. Demott has recognized that Masons did not move into the social and service spheres until the 1920’s [10]. During the nineteenth century, Freemasonry centered around the rituals and their meanings. But Joseph was involved in folk magic and understood that ritual performances contained truth and power.

Also, Joseph Smith had taken a stand against excited religion of the Burned-over District; he believed that God had revealed that it was corrupt. Therefore, Smith may not have been impressed with the corrupt Christians’ religious critiques of Masonry.

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of Mormon’s teachings against secret societies as a reference to Masonry.

Despite the sensitivity towards Mormonism of this modern viewpoint, the Anti-masonic movement is proof that many outsiders to Freemasonry could see a connection of secrecy between its members. And the coincidence that Mormonism was founded in an area of such great anti-secrecy sentiment proves that Mormon readers would have made a direct connection.

Smith was a seeker-type. He had denied other forms of religion as wrong, or “corrupt,” and was on a quest to find religious truth. Since his followers agreed with his rejection, they were also seekers (only limited in the scope of their seeking by Smith’s revelations). This seeking makes a strong connection with Freemason philosophy, a philosophy of learning or seeking. It was a quest for things lost, for light, for wisdom, and for truth [10].

Another connection of Freemasonry and Mormonism was that Freemasonry required certain attributes for membership: a sound mind and body, admirable citizenship, high morals, and a belief in God. All of these characteristics were required of Mormons, as well.

Unlike Mormonism’s movement, the story of Masonic development westward is primarily one of expansion. Masons expanded into the west as quickly as pioneers demanded lodges. As territories became states, new Grand Lodges were formed by a neighboring state’s Grand Lodge. As class distinction disappeared in American Freemasonry, new lodges grew much faster and the understanding of the Craft became diluted.

For example, nine lodges were created in Illinois (future home of the Nauvoo Lodge) between 1806 and 1840 by five different state Grand Lodges. Western Star Lodge (June 2, 1806) was the first; it was chartered by the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania for a group of politicians and officers. Kentucky, Tennessee, Missouri, and Indiana Grand Lodges also dispensed charters. The Grand Lodge of Illinois was created in 1840, making quick expansion within Illinois even easier [27].

These various connections between early Mormonism and Freemasonry did not

explain the later Mormon excitement over Masonry. There existed some possible reasons that the Book of Mormon's teachings were left behind. The two groups did have some common ideals, and Masonry was spreading quickly, but the strong motives or religious justifications for the Nauvoo Lodge just didn't exist before Nauvoo.

## Chapter 4

# Nauvoo: Theological Developments

The various connections of early Mormonism and Freemasonry discussed above fail to explain the founding and popularity of the Nauvoo Lodge. But connections existed, and Mormonism, a dynamic religion, was capable of becoming more closely related to Masonry.

It was the doctrinal development of Mormonism in Nauvoo that provided the way for the founding of the Lodge, and brought about the high level of motivation to accept and excitement to join Freemasonry. Although Mormonism was a primitivist movement and drew heavily upon Biblical Judaism, before Nauvoo it had surprisingly lacked strong ritualization. In three short years (1839-1842), Joseph and the Mormon leadership instituted many new doctrinal concepts to the Mormon people that changed this situation. Joseph Smith's revelations on baptism for the dead, the changing roles of God and man, perfectionism (and progression), and the Mormon

priesthood all placed a new emphasis on rituals and a lifestyle that embodied religious truth in its actions.

Additionally, Joseph Smith's relationship with the Mormons developed an interesting theme because of his new doctrines. The new doctrines of the Prophet were the most challenging yet issued to the Mormons because American Protestantism was their overwhelming background. Goaded by the disappointment of failed communities in Ohio and Missouri, Mormons questioned the new doctrines of Smith as they had never done before. Although the Nauvoo Mormons were dependent upon Joseph for new doctrine, they did not blindly follow him. This makes the popular acceptance of the Lodge quite powerful in understanding the Nauvoo Mormons.

John C. Bennett, a mayor of Nauvoo, wrote that Nauvoo had once been a small village of only twenty houses, but that within three years of the first Mormon arrival, the population grew to seven thousand inhabitants with another three thousand Mormons in the close vicinity [6, p. 4]. The city grew to have paved roads, schools, a dozen shops, a steam-powered flour mill, and a foundry.

Nauvoo provided Smith with an increased sense of security. There were some efforts to extradite him to Missouri, but they were handled through legal means. He was still physically threatened, and would hide for short periods of time, but he still had much more freedom than ever before. Nauvoo, then the largest city in Illinois, was full of loyal Mormons who would protect him. The Nauvoo Legion, an independent Mormon militia numbering around two thousand provided even more security.

In this sense of security, Smith proclaimed some of the most challenging and "peculiar" of Mormon doctrines. In a letter to the High Council on 18 June 1840,

Joseph Smith wrote of himself:

That your memorialist feels it a duty which he owes God as well as to the Church to give his attention more particularly to those things connec[ted] with the spiritual welfare of the saints (which have now become a great people) so that they may be built up in their most holy faith and be enabled to go on to perfection -

. . . he [Smith] thinks and verily believes that the time has come when he should devote himself exclusively to those things which relate to spiritualities of the Church . . . and in order to attend to those things, prays that your honorable body will relieve him from the anxi[ety] and trouble necessarily attendant on business transactions . . . [30, pp. 466-467]

In his security, Joseph related that he was most concerned with spirituality of the Mormons. He placed some of the burdens of leadership in the hands of his top Church advisors, the Quorum of the Twelve. His goal was to have time to reveal the ways that Mormons could be “enabled to go on to perfection.”

Baptism for the dead was a purely ritualistic revelation of Smith. He first introduced the doctrine on 15 May 1840, when he wrote that “people could now act for their friends who had departed this life, and that the plan of salvation was calculated to save all those who were willing to obey the requirements of the law of the God” [34, p. 54]. The typical Protestant practice of baptism symbolized conversion. Baptism for the dead empowered the Mormons to bring about the conversion of the dead.

This empowerment brought the Mormons much closer to those powers Protestantism attributed directly to God and was quite risky to introduce. In a letter to the Quorum of the Twelve, then in England, on 15 December 1840, Joseph Smith wrote:

I presume the doctrine of “Baptism for the dead” has ere this reached your ears, and may have raised some inquiries inside your mind respecting the

same. I cannot in this letter give you all the information you may desire on the subject, but aside from my knowledge independent of the Bible, I would say, that this was certainly practised by the antient Churches and St Paul endeavours to prove the doctrine of the resurrection from the same, and says “else what shall they do who are baptised for the dead” c c. I first mentioned the doctrine in public while preaching the funeral sermon of Bro Brunson, and have since then given general instruc[tions] to the Church on the subject. [30]

In the letter, Smith felt it was necessary to support the new doctrine with Biblical scripture. Certainly, a Biblical reference to an early Christian, like the Biblical Apostle Paul, provided a strong argument because Mormonism was a restorationist movement. Still, his reference to the fact that there may be “some inquiries inside the mind[s]” of the Twelve expressed that they were capable of questioning him, and that he was aware of this fact.

On 19 January 1841, Smith made a revelation concerning the building of the Nauvoo Temple. In it, he specifically revealed that more rituals were to be revealed to the Mormons:

. . . verily I say unto you, that your anointings, and your washings, and your baptisms for the dead, and your solemn assemblies, and your memorials for your sacrifices, by the sons of Levi [the priesthood], and for your oracles in your most high places, wherein you receive conversations, and your statutes and judgements for the beginning of the revelations and foundations of Zion, and for the glory, honor and empowerment of all her municipals, are ordained by the ordinance of my holy house which my people are always commanded to build unto my holy name . . .that I may reveal mine ordinances therin . . .

For I deign to reveal . . . things which have been kept hid from the before the foundation of the world, things that pertain to the dispensation of the fullness of times;

And I will show unto my servant Joseph all things pertaining unto this house, and the priesthood thereof; . . . [29, vol. 4, pp. 276-278]

Specifically, the new rituals for the Temple were to be revealed and enacted by the

Mormon priesthood. These new rituals were to bring about “the fullness of times,” or the millennial Kingdom.

In the spring of 1842, John Wentworth, editor of the *Chicago Democrat*, requested from Smith a sketch of the history of the Mormon Church. Smith’s response, now known as the Articles of Faith, appeared in the 1 March 1842 edition of the Nauvoo paper *Times and Seasons*. In it, Joseph states, “We believe all that God has revealed, all that he does now reveal, and we believe that he will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the kingdom of God” [32, p. 437]. Smith restated the importance of revelation, especially that which was forthcoming to bring about the millennial Kingdom.

Throughout 1841, Smith had been heavily involved in “translating” an Egyptian papyrus that became the Mormon’s Book of Abraham. Smith began the publication of the Book of Abraham in the *Times and Seasons* on 1 March 1842, the same time that the Articles were published and two weeks before the installation of the Nauvoo Lodge. The book “showed how Abraham in the pre-mortal state had used his free will and intelligence to make him a great figure in the eyes of God. He had been chosen to become a great figure in mortality. This choosing was not a predestination, but a foreordination based on the right choices he made before he came to earth, and his wisely making the same choice of good during mortality” [22].

The power of man in Mormonism made a great leap in this revelation. It showed that even before his birth, man had a great free will to control the level of his religiosity. Coupled with new rituals, like baptism for the dead, and the revelation of forthcoming ordinances that dealt with Temple work, the power of the Mormon to



perfect himself and the Mormon Zion of Nauvoo began to seem limitless.

## Chapter 5

# The Founding of Nauvoo Lodge

In the summer of 1841, a group of Nauvoo Mormons that were already Masons sent a communication to the nearest Masonic lodge, Bodley Lodge No. 1 of Quincy. The group of men included John C. Bennett, Heber C. Kimball, and Hyrum Smith, all leaders in the Mormon Church and some of Joseph's closest allies. The communication asked for a recommendation (a usual practice) that they might establish a Lodge in Nauvoo. Bodley denied the petition:

records of Bodley Lodge No. 1, at Quincy, Illinois from June 28, 1841:

A communication was received from John C. Bennett and others, of the city of Nauvoo, asking this Lodge to recommend to the Grand Lodge of the State certain individuals whose names were therein [sic] contained to be appointed Master and Wardens of a Lodge to be established at said city; but as these persons were unknown to this Lodge as Masons; it was thought prudent not to do so. [17]

Their stated reason for refusal was that they did not know any of the Nauvoo Mormon Masons petitioning to be Masons, and therefore, they could not make a recommendation.

Despite this, on October 15, 1842, Grand Master Jonas directly issued a dispensation for the Nauvoo Mormon Masons to construct their own lodge. The Nauvoo Masons began meeting immediately.

It is important to note that Jonas did not initiate the interest in founding a Nauvoo Lodge. He may have used the opportunity for political gain, but he did not initiate the opportunity. Jonas's motivation for giving the dispensation has been attributed to a desire for political support (he was running for a position in the state legislature) and to a desire to increase the small number of Masons in Illinois [13].

Within five months of the dispensation, Jonas installed the lodge (15 March 1842). His swift installation and his making Smith a "Mason at sight," one of the highest honors in Masonry further upset Bodley and other local Lodges. Obviously, the Mormon Masons did not initiate the Lodge in order to appease relations with their neighboring non-Mormons. The fact that the Nauvoo Lodge was allowed to grow extremely fast is a further sign that the Mormons were not concerned with courting outsiders.<sup>1</sup>

A Mormon political motivation for founding the lodge is lacking. Joseph Smith had previously stated that he would support whatever political party supported Mormon aims [29, Vol. III, p. 651]. No evidence supports the fact that Mormons wanted the

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<sup>1</sup>Note: In *Joseph Smith and the Masons*, Godfrey argues the opposite view. He feels the Mormons installed Masonry in order to gain the acceptance of the Gentiles. Specifically, Godfrey points to the "Missouri experience" as the prime mover in creating a Mormon need for stability [12].

lodge in order to align themselves with any certain political group.

The view that Mormons, especially Joseph Smith, would have allowed a Masonic Lodge to enter into the Kingdom for reasons other than religious seems mystifying. The establishment of the lodge had no great connection to the community's stability or political power. Other reasons were present. Nauvoo was a religious community, and arguments that ignore the religiosity of the Nauvoo Mormons simply do not work.

# Chapter 6

## Joseph Smith and the Lodge

Joseph's Smith role in the founding of Nauvoo Lodge is of particular interest (and highly controversial). In Nauvoo, Smith made his greatest effort at constructing the Kingdom. The fact that he felt the lodge fit into this Mormon Zion and his own life sheds valuable light on the founding Prophet of Mormonism.

Various theories that measure Smith's involvement or interest in Freemasonry have been proposed by scholars. They are outlined and considered thoroughly in Appendix A. In general, the theories portray Smith as disinterested in the Lodge, diminishing much of the significance of the Lodge founding as it pertains to Mormonism. These theories are contrary to evidence that suggests Smith had personal and religious motives for the Lodge founding, and that he did heavily involve himself with Masonry in Nauvoo as soon as it was introduced, if not before. It also denies the fact that Joseph was in total control of all affairs in Nauvoo and simply would not have *allowed* Freemasonry to enter his carefully planned community.

Joseph Smith exerted extensive control over all aspects of Nauvoo life. Nauvoo

was the Mormons' Zion, and Joseph was responsible to form it in the image of the Kingdom, for the outside world was corrupt. The idea that he did not take an active interest in all phases of the Lodge is highly unlikely.

In fact, his control over the Lodge was evident from its beginning. All of the leaders of the early Nauvoo Lodge were Smith's closest allies and leaders of the Church. Hyrum Smith, the second most powerful member of the Lodge leadership, had been Joseph Smith's closest companion from Mormonism's beginning. George Miller, the leader of the Lodge (Worshipful Master) was extremely close to Smith, and the following piece of Miller's retrospection on Masonry showed that he placed Mormonism above Freemasonry:

About this time [1819] I had advanced to the highest degree in ancient Free Masonry. I never took the delight in the institution that some seemed to take. My impressions were that it was corrupt, not carrying out in practice its professions. In time, I believed it was like the religious sects then extant, corrupt in proportion to the wickedness and corruptions of the great mass of people all over the world. [23, p. 91]

The rise and fall of John C. Bennett proves that Joseph Smith had the power in the Mormon Lodge from its inception, as well. Bennett had been Smith's "right-hand man," at one time literally second in command of the Mormons. He was the mayor of Nauvoo, general of the Nauvoo Legion (the Mormon militia), and a respected doctor, too. Apparently, Smith and Bennett had a falling out. Many writers claim that it was Bennett's poor character that brought about his fall, although evidence suggests that Smith felt threatened by Bennett's power, and brought him down by accusation. This evidence is presented in Appendix B.

Smith wrote to the General Church Clerk and Recorder, James Sloan on 17 May

1842, “You will be so good as to permit General Bennett to withdraw his name from the Church record, if he desires to do so, and this with the best of feelings towards you and General Bennett” [6, pp. 40-41]. After losing his membership in the Church, Bennett resigned his office as mayor on 19 May 1842. Smith quickly took the elected position over without an election.

Immediately, charges against Bennett were brought forth in the Nauvoo Lodge. The “original Minute Book of Nauvoo Lodge U.D.” (Mervin Hogan was granted permission to publish parts of this document held in the L.D.S. archives) shows that on 19 May 1842, seventy-nine members of the lodge met, including Joseph Smith and all of the Lodge officers *except* the Secretary John C. Bennett. The minutes read:

The W. M. [Worshipful Master George Miller] then read the following charge preferred against Dr. John C. Bennett by Thomas Grover, to wit:

That Dr. John C. Bennett has palmed himself upon the Masonic Brethren in the organization of Nauvoo Lodge U.D. as a regular mason in good standing, when I have reason to believe that he is an expelled mason from a lodge in Fairfield, Ohio, or from Fairfield Lodge, Ohio.

Thomas Grover. [18, p. 14]

At the 16 June 1842 meeting of the Lodge, Bennett presented documents that supported his character and good standing in Masonry. The Lodge then “resolved, that his case be further postponed until the next regular communication . . . giving furtherance for the minutes of the lodge at Pickaway concerning Bennett’s expulsion to be obtained” [18, p. 17]. At the 7 July 1842 meeting of the lodge, “The W. M. then stated that with regard to the case of John C. Bennett he had not as yet received any communication from Pickaway Lodge but did not judge it necessary to postpone the action of the Lodge in his case any longer” [18, p. 18].

Bennett was then removed from the Lodge for having been an expelled Mason *without proof*. Joseph's accusations were enough reason for the Lodge to act against Bennett. The early Lodge was under Joseph's sway.

Holding the power over the lodge was not Smith's only concern with the Lodge. He was deeply interested in taking part in the Lodge. He was part of the elaborate installation ceremony when the Lodge was officially set to work by Abraham Jonas on 15 March 1842. He proudly accepted being made a "Mason at sight."

Smith showed his interest in the Lodge before the installation. At the second meeting of the Lodge under dispensation, on 20 December 1841, the "By-Laws of Nauvoo Lodge" were set in place. They put forth the regular meeting time, fees, and general business rules for the Lodge (under dispensation). The minutes for this early meeting of the Masons shows that Joseph Smith had already petitioned for membership in the Lodge [16, p. 8].

The Nauvoo Lodge made a special effort to help Smith rise to the degree of Master Mason quickly. The minutes show that at nine o'clock at night of the installation day, Joseph was initiated as an Entered Apprentice Mason. At 9 o'clock the next morning (16 March 1842), Smith passed on to the degree of "F. C." Mason. The minutes make an interesting note that he was allowed to perform the ritual because his "proficiency [in the ritual] was vouched for." At 2 o'clock, Smith was raised to "the third and sublime degree" [16, pp. 12-13].

On 8 July 1842, John C. Bennett claimed that Joseph Smith was made a Master Mason before the lodge was officially installed [2, 8 July 1842]. This would seem to explain Smith's "proficiency" in the rituals. James Cummings, another of Smith's



close friends, had taken part in the Prophet's initiation ceremony. He later stated that Smith seemed "to understand some of the features of the ceremony better than any Mason and that he made explanations that rendered the rites much more beautiful and full of meaning" [12]. His statement shows that Joseph was proficient in the rituals, and as the Prophet, he was also afforded the ability to interpret the rituals.

All meetings of the early Nauvoo Lodge, even while under dispensation, convened in Joseph Smith's red-brick store. His building served as the main meeting place for the city. There was a large room adjacent to his own private office, from which Joseph Smith could supervise all meetings.<sup>1</sup> It is unlikely that Smith would have avoided the meetings of the Lodge under dispensation.

Even more, Joseph Smith had personal, religious motives for bringing Freemasonry to Nauvoo. For him, Freemasonry provided truth concerning the Mormon priesthood (drawn from the issues of priesthood and power in Masonic practice) and a quality of secrecy that was quite valuable in introducing difficult doctrines, like polygamy, in a time when his revelations were questioned.

The completion of the Nauvoo Temple was heavily stressed by Joseph Smith throughout 1841 and 1842. In 1840, Smith had revealed that many new rituals would be given to the Mormon priesthood to be administered in the Temple. The strong ritualistic emphasis of nineteenth century Freemasonry would have been attractive to him. The Lodge had a restricted membership, paralleling the fact that the new

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<sup>1</sup>The same room was used for many different functions. It was first designed to be a room for surplus stock, but it became a special meeting hall for the city of Nauvoo. The Nauvoo Relief Society (a Mormon women's society) meetings, priesthood councils, municipal meetings, school classes, theatrical presentations, debates, lectures, and staff meetings met there. It was referred to as the Prophet's general business office, the Lodge Room of the Nauvoo Masons, the Council Chamber for priesthood and municipal bodies, and generally as the Assembly Room [8].

rituals of Mormonism were intended for the Mormon priesthood, a limited group.

Following his role as a seeker-type, Smith did recognize truth in Freemasonry, especially as it related to the Mormon priesthood. Freemasonry was represented by him as being a corrupt form of the primitivist Mormon priesthood. On 17 June 1842, Heber C. Kimball wrote to Parley P. Pratt, "There is a similarity of preast Hood in masonry. Bro. Joseph ses masonry was taken from preasthood but has become degenerated. but menney things are perfect" [35].

By 1841, Smith had become heavily involved with polygamy. As has been shown, the Nauvoo Mormons did not accept Joseph's new doctrines without examination. Although polygamy can be seen as a radical extension of earlier Mormon doctrine that stressed the importance of Biblical Judaism, it was problematic doctrine he could have revealed.

In a sermon on July 1, 1841, entitled "Restoration of All Things," Smith proclaimed that a "patriarchal, or plural order of marriage, as practised by the ancients, would again be established" [36, p. 338]. The words were not accepted with much enthusiasm, however. Smith quickly retracted his statements when he sensed the Mormons' discomfort with the doctrine and he realised the danger of retaliation from non-Mormons.

From that point, the doctrine became a secret under Smith's control. Although Smith and other Mormon leaders were practicing polygamists, Smith hypocritically referred to polygamy a "false and corrupt" doctrine:

As we have lately been credibly informed, that an elder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints by the name of Hiram Brown, has been

preaching Polygamy, and other false and corrupt doctrines, in the county of Lapeer, state of Michigan.

This is to notify him and the church in general, that he has been cut off from the Church, for his iniquity; and he is further notified to appear at the Special Conference on the 6th of April next, to answer to these charges.

JOSEPH SMITH

HYRUM SMITH

*Presidents of Said Church* [29, Vol V, p. 423]

During a discourse on 15 October 1843, Smith commented in a sermon that “The secrets of masonry is to keep a secret” [31]. Obviously, Smith understood the long-standing claim that Masonry contained secrecy. This attribute was quite valuable for Joseph to introduce his new, controversial doctrine of polygamy.

## Chapter 7

# The Acceptance of the Lodge

The Nauvoo Masonic Lodge grew extraordinarily fast. In the first five months of its operation, the lodge initiated 256 candidates and raised 243 more; this was six times the combined number of initiations and elevations from all of the other lodges in Illinois combined. Obviously, the Mormons were highly motivated to join the Lodge. As a strong religious community, the Mormons would not have supported the Lodge without religious justifications, and they would not have joined with such fervor without religious motives.

Mormonism had always been a hotbed of millennialism. The “common” Nauvoo Mormons were dependent upon Joseph Smith for new revelations about how they might bring the millennial Kingdom to Earth. Thus, the times at Nauvoo were exciting for Mormons. Smith’s revelations dealt with their spirituality, rather than issues of economics, politics, or persecution.

Smith’s new doctrines were provocative and difficult for Nauvoo Mormons. As has been shown, they did not blindly accept new doctrines. The Mormons were

overwhelmingly in support of the Lodge, however, showing that the Lodge, if accepted for religious reasons, must have touched solid theological strings in the Mormons.

Other alleged reasons common Mormons would have joined or supported the Lodge do not adequately explain the great acceptance and growth of the Lodge. One possible motivation to support Freemasonry would have been to have had an opportunity to be a member of an elitist group (either defined by economic status or in Church standing).

American Freemasonry, especially after the anti-Masonic movement, lacked the economic elitism expressed by English Freemasonry. A comparison of the occupations of the early Lodge members shows that the earliest Mormon Masons were initially evenly distributed over economic classes; this is presented in Appendix C.

The quick growth of the Lodge showed that the Lodge was not meant to be an exclusive club. The domination of the Mormon leadership in the early Lodge should be viewed as another example of Smith's control of the Lodge and his view that the Lodge contained truth about the priesthood, and was not an effort at elitism.

A final possible motive for the Mormons to have supported Freemasonry was that the fraternity could have offered a new way for social interaction between Nauvoo Mormon men. Freemasonry of the nineteenth century did not provide any more ways for socializing than the Mormon priesthood already had, however. The great number of rituals performed by the Lodge showed that the Nauvoo Lodge was much more concerned with Masonic practice than with socializing. Furthermore, neighboring non-Mormon lodges shunned the Nauvoo Lodge.

The Oliver Olney papers provide a fascinating insight into the Nauvoo Lodge

founding. Olney was born in England and came to Connecticut early in his life. From there, he moved to Ohio where he was converted to Mormonism in 1831. He travelled with the Mormons from Ohio to Missouri and finally to Nauvoo. A widower when he began his papers, Olney had been married to one woman; together, they had seven children. Olney never practiced Freemasonry.

In general, Olney's writings were critical of the Mormon Church leadership. He felt that his long experience as a Saint allowed him some authority to criticize the Church. On 6 April 1842, he wrote in his typical prophetic and prosy style:

Almost from the rise of the Church  
Their ways and their doings  
Has been familiar to me [25, 6 April 1842]

He recognized the significance of Freemasonry's arrival to Nauvoo. Interestingly, he supported the founding of Masonry for *religious* reasons- not social, political, or economic ones. Olney wrote in his journal on 6 April 1842 (approximately three weeks after the Nauvoo Lodge was installed):

We have of late had an institution setup . . .  
Said to be Masonry In its best state  
As I am not a mason,  
I know not of its Charms  
But they say threw it to obtain  
The fulness of the Priesthood  
. . .the Antient Prophits  
That long since lived As being Masons  
That has much encouraged L.D.S.  
They think soon to arise to perfection  
As some few secrets they have obtained

That doth much encourage them  
On the way to meet  
The coming of the Son of man  
As he is soon a comming  
With the Saints in the air  
They now for his second advent  
Are a wishing to be prepared  
That they may ever be with  
The Father and Son [25, 6 April 1842]

Olney connected the founding of the Lodge with the Mormon priesthood and themes of perfectionism, all enshrouded in millennialist language. Apparently, the justification given to the common Mormons for the lodge was that the Mormon Masons would be able to “obtain the fulness” of the priesthood. A Mormon would automatically associate this with Smith’s previous revelations that the priesthood was to obtain new rituals for the Temple.

Olney thought that the Mormon Masons “[thought] soon to arise to perfection” through the Masonic rituals. Joseph’s earlier revelations on the related nature of God and man and the importance of perfecting one’s self would have made a direct connection between Mormonism and Masonic ideas to the Mormons.

The newly developed rituals, when performed in the Temple, were to bring about the final steps in the establishment of the Kingdom. Thus, the Mormon Masons were excited at the prospect of ushering in the “second advent,” the “coming of the Son of man,” and the ushering in of millennial Kingdom.

Olney trusted in the hopes of the Mormon Masons, too. Although most of his writing was critical of the Church, he believed that Masonry contained further en-

lightenment regarding the priesthood, and trusted that the Mormon leadership would use their knowledge for the Kingdom. On 4 June 1842, he wrote:

They have received Of masonry  
I cannot speak But of their works  
I will venture to say Will forv excede  
Any thing that can be found  
In the history of our American Soil [25, 4 June 1842]

The Mormons' adverse reaction to polygamy offers an interesting contrast to the acceptance of Freemasonry in Nauvoo. For the most part, Mormons had an American Protestant background and modelled their families according to its social norms. As expressed through early Mormon doctrine, their conceptions were supported and promoted by the Mormon patriarchal system.

The doctrine of polygamy challenged the sex roles of the Mormons deeply, especially the women who would have to share themselves. Many women were insulted by the doctrine, and some were prompted to leave their husbands. This shows that the women of Nauvoo were quite capable of rejecting the introduction of a doctrine. Although the founding of the Nauvoo Lodge was not as grossly sexual in nature, it was gender-specific. Only men could participate, but Mormon women did have reasons to support the lodge.

Four characteristics define the "true womanhood" that was held in esteem by mid-nineteenth century women: piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity. Mormon women related directly to these attributes, but went further by accepting their gender-specific roles as fulfilling divine will. "Thus, injunctions issued by Smith in regard to domestic issues as well as religious polity . . . became the word of the Lord on a host



of subjects [for the Nauvoo women]" [7, p. 33]. Therefore, although excluded from Freemasonry, Nauvoo women accepted their role in the society as a *religious act* and offered their support for the Lodge.

The development of the Female Relief Society helped to ease the exclusion, as well. The Relief Society served a social function like many contemporary voluntary societies in America. But the Relief Society had a ritualistic, secret side similar to that of Masonry. Like other organizations, the Relief Society met outside of Smith's office and Smith attended the meetings whenever possible. Smith spoke to the women about being "good Masons," ancient orders, keys, tokens, degrees, secrets, candidates, lodges, and signs [24, p. 105]. On 28 March 1842, Joseph met with the Society, "and after presiding at the admission of many new members gave a lecture on the Priesthood shewing how the sisters would come in possession of the privileges, blessings, and gifts of the Priesthood, and that the signs should follow them" [31, p. 244]. This similarity to Masonry served to diminish the exclusivity and secrecy of the Lodge.

Nauvoo Mormon men were involved in much more than just the Lodge. They spent their time working in the Nauvoo Legion, the priesthood, missionary activity, town politics, normal labor or business, and more. John D. Lee reflected that while he was in Nauvoo he "was Librarian of the Order [Masonry]. [He] was also Wharf Master of the city, and held the position of Major in the Nauvoo Legion, and commanded an escort in the Fifth Infantry. [He] was made the general clerk and reader for the Seventies and issued the laws to that body" [21, pp. 144-145]. The Nauvoo Mormons have been criticized for this "worldly" lifestyle. But even a cursory examination of Mormonism explains that the social acts of the Mormons were essentially religious

because their social order had been revealed by the Prophet Joseph Smith. Marvin S. Hill has argued that this unfair critique arose from the post-Reformation outlook of many modern scholars; they separate the religious from the social and political [15].

All of the Mormon efforts in Nauvoo were essentially religious. All of their efforts were for the establishment of the Kingdom. When compared to the other “works” of the Nauvoo Mormons, the founding of a Masonic lodge was significant because the Church’s doctrinal developments were necessary for the lodge to have been introduced and for it to have flourished.

# Appendix A

## Theories of Joseph Smith's Involvement in the Founding of Nauvoo Lodge

The role of Joseph Smith in the founding of the Nauvoo Lodge has been hypothesized by many. In *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi*, Flanders argues that Joseph *allows* Masonry to enter Nauvoo because the “Kingdom was not intended to lack urbanity or the accouterments of American middle class culture” [11]. This argument rests on the assumption that others desired the Masonic Lodge for secular reasons, or reasons that were connected with mainline American society, rather than with the goals of Mormonism. At no point did Mormonism in Nauvoo begin to assimilate itself with mainstream American culture. The Masonic Lodge was a singularity that supported this hypothesis. One must ask, why were not more secular organizations begun in Nauvoo? Joseph never spoke of assimilation, and his new doctrines in Nauvoo served

to only further distance Mormonism from Protestantism.

In Mervin Hogan's *Joseph Smith and Freemasonry*, Joseph Smith deliberately allowed Masonry in Nauvoo as a means for acceptance of the Mormon Church by the general public and as a possible organ of growth for the Church [19]. But, as has been shown, non-Mormons were opposed to Mormon involvement with Masonry from the beginning, and Smith was certainly not blind to this fact. Mormon involvement in Masonry would not have served to ingratiate themselves to the Gentiles, much less to convert the non-Mormons. Again, no direct evidence from Joseph or the leadership supports this hypothesis.

Hogan also contended that Joseph Smith, through the beginning of Mormonism in the Burned-over District and through his relatives and friends, had a high exposure to Freemasonry all of his life. Therefore, the installation of Freemasonry was not done for Joseph Smith to become "personally versed in Freemasonry." In other words, Hogan argues that Joseph Smith had no desire to bring Masonry to Nauvoo for himself. Joseph Smith controlled all aspects of Nauvoo society and he had ultimate control in whether or not the lodge could be founded, however. As mentioned above, the lodge founding may have even been a risky move for him.

Smith's quick rise in Masonic ritual (possibly before the Lodge was set to work) showed that he did become "personally versed" in Masonic thought.

Kenneth Godfrey argued that "Joseph Smith and others desired the brotherhood and fellowship that this fraternity [Masonry] offered and that there was nothing more to Mormon Masonic involvement than this" [12]. But almost the complete majority of the Lodge, especially in its inception, were part of the Mormon priesthood. They

worked hand-in-hand with Smith every day.

# Appendix B

## John C. Bennett

A common assessment of Bennett can be found in the recently published work of Nauvoo social history, *Women of Nauvoo*:

Based on rumours, several individuals envisioned and sometimes practiced alternative nonmonogamous marriages quite different from that revealed by Joseph. Of these, John C. Bennett, mayor of Nauvoo, chose to distort the teaching for his own advantage.

Capitalizing on rumors and the lack of understanding among the Saints, Bennett presented a counter doctrine he called "spiritual wifery." Along with several close confidants, he sought to have illicit sexual relationships with women by telling them that they were married "spiritually," even if they had never been married legally. Bennett and his followers claimed authority from Church leaders, including Joseph Smith. [20, p. 129]

None of the quoted material is given with footnotes or referencing. In fact, the book uses Bennett's own language for Smith's polygamy, "spiritual wifery" [6, [p. 229] Much as heresay and rumours could tear through the city of Nauvoo, Bennett's character has been decided without any investigation.

Bennett did know about polygamy and two Mormon women came forward in late 1842 claiming to have had affairs with him. But the overwhelming evidence shows

that Smith issued one particular accusation towards Bennett that was enough to discredit him. Smith claimed that Bennett and Sarah Pratt, wife of Apostle Orson Pratt, had an affair. John Lee gives an account: "John C. Bennett became suspected, and fears were entertained that he would join the faction. He was accused of selling offices in the military organization, to certain men who would help him win the good graces of some of the young sisters, and that he became intimate with Orson Pratt's wife, while Pratt was on a mission. That he built her a fine frame house, and lodged with her used her as his wife" [21, pp. 147-148]. Various accusations were flying, but the story of Sarah Pratt was constant.

Here is another account of the accusation as found in *Fifteen Years Among the Mormons*:

Orson Pratt, then, as now, one of the "Twelve," was sent by Joseph Smith on a mission to England. During his absence, his first (i.e. his lawful) wife, Sarah, occupied a house owned by John C. Bennett, a man of some note, and at that time, quartermaster-general of the Nauvoo Legion. Sarah was an educated woman, of fine accomplishments, and attracted the attention of the Prophet Joseph, who called upon her one day, and alleged he found John C. Bennett in bed with her. As we lived but across the street from her house we saw and heard the whole uproar. Sarah ordered the Prophet out of the house, and the Prophet used obscene language to her.

When brother Orson returned a short time after this, and heard the story, he believed his wife rather than the Prophet, and charged the latter with lying. They were both arraigned before the Church, and tried; the husband for disputing the Prophet, and the wife for adultery; and both were cut off. [14, p. 31]

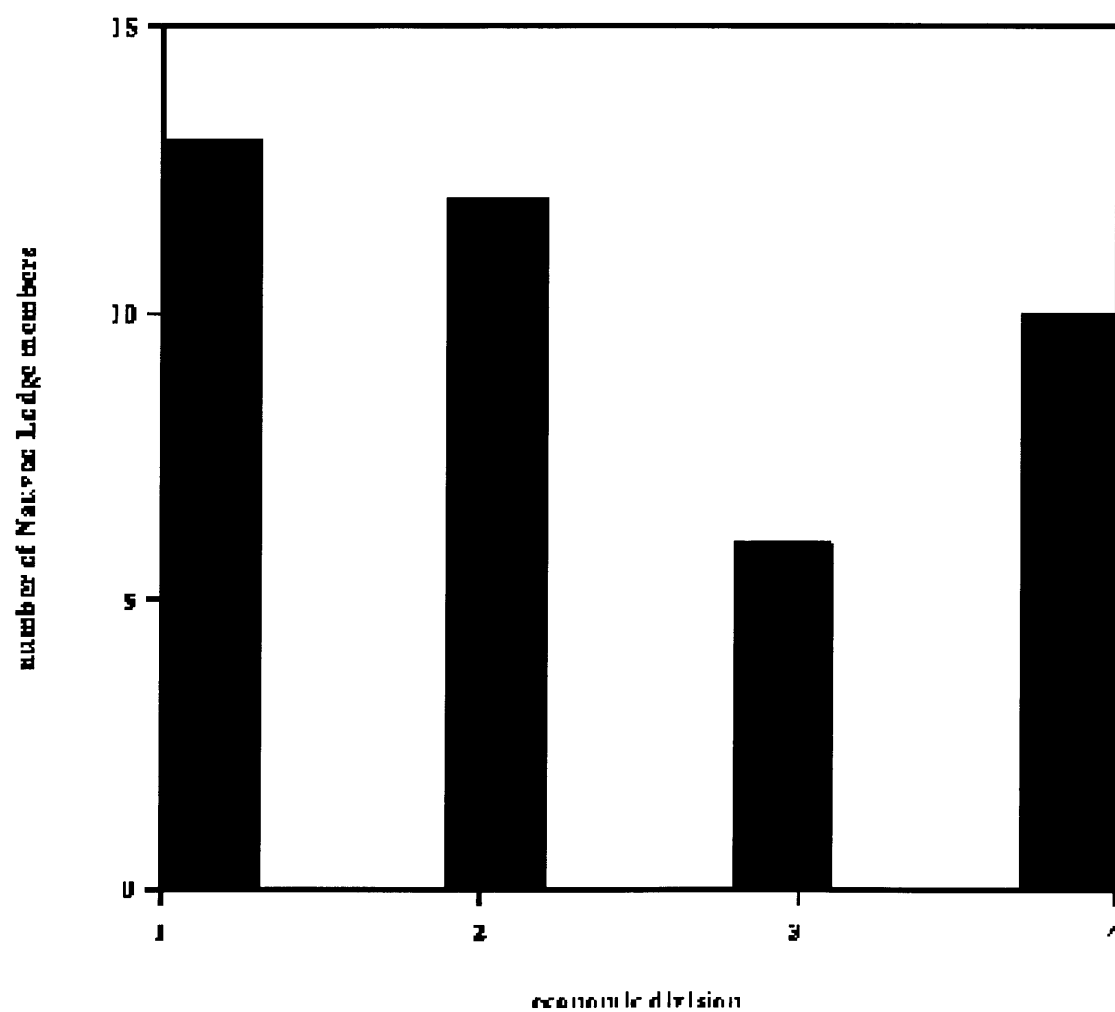
Bennett had been good friends with the Pratts. Sarah, a highly respected woman, denied the accusations of Smith. Her husband supported her position, and both were excommunicated.

## **Appendix C**

# **Histogram of Early Nauvoo Lodge Members' Economic Standing**

The following graph represents the rough economic divisions of the early Nauvoo Lodge as presented in the Founding Minutes. When a Nauvoo Mormon applied for initiation to the Nauvoo Lodge, their name and occupation were listed. The histogram presents four broad classes of economic standing: farmers (1), skilled workers (2), merchants (3), and politicians, lawyers, and other wealthier “elite” members of the community (4). The graph shows that the Lodge was not dominated by the “elite” [16, pp. 8-12]





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